

Records of "The Commandments of the Seven Wise Men" in the 3rd c. B.C.

The Revered "Greek Reading-book" of the Hellenistic World.

Among the known pupils of Aristotle, a certain Klearchos of Soli in Cyprus seems to have been rather famous in his times.¹ All what we know now about this once well known scholar, however, are a few fragments and titles from his lost works and the feeling we get from them that he had travelled extensively in the Hellenistic Near East and as far as India.²

Excavating the Greco-Bactrian city at Ai-Khanum in Afghanistan, the French archaeologists of the field-team were extremely happy on the 22nd of October 1966. What they had uncovered on this day was a rather unexpected and very important find. It was a stone base for a stele, with a Greek epigram inscribed in four lines (Fig. 1) and to its right five more lines of ethical commandments.³ As far as the excavators knew at first sight, this was the first and

the earliest (3rd c. B.C.) Greek inscription ever found in this outpost of the Hellenistic world.⁴

The epigram was unpublished and unknown in Greek literature. Its author, Klearchos, was beyond any doubt the far-travelled pupil of Aristotle mentioned above.⁵ However, the interesting story that the epigram narrated to us was something that we had never heard before. The stele, once standing on the base with the epigram, was a copy of the "Commandments of the Wise Men" originally inscribed on a stele dedicated at Delphi in Greece. Klearchos assures the reader that he himself copied the "Commandments" *very carefully* from the original inscription at Delphi, and that this copy was used for reinscribing them on the stele he dedicated in the shrine of the Greco-Bactrian city's "hero-founder." What was the

Inscr. Bactriana: Ref. Ed.: Louis Robert, *CRAI*
1968, 421-424.

3rd c. B.C.

1 Άνδρῶν τοι σοφὰ ταῦτα παλαιοτέρων ἀνάχει[τα]ι
2 ῥήματα ἀριγνώτων Πυθοῖ ἐν ἡγαθέαι,
3 ἐνθεν ταῦτ[α] Κλέαρχος ἐπιφραδέως ἀναγράφας
4 εἴσατο τηλαυγῇ Κινέου ἐν τεμένει.

*These wise commandments of men of old,
- Words of well known thinkers - stand dedicated
in the most holy Pythian shrine;
From there Klearchos copied them very carefully
and brought them here in the shrine of Kineas
to shine far around it.*

1. F. Wehrli, *Die Schule des Aristoteles* No. 3: Klearchos (Basel, 1948).

2. L. Robert, "De Delphes a l'Oxus: Inscriptions grecques nouvelles de la Bactriane," *CRAI* 1968, 442-454. Al.N. Oikonomides, "The Lost Delphic Inscription with the Commandments of the Seven and P. Univ. Athen. 2782," *ZPE* 37 (1980) 179-183.

3. L. Robert (note 2), 421-424. J. et L. Robert, *Bull.* 1969, 601. Inst. F. Courby, *Nouveau Choix d'Inscriptions Grecques*, (Paris, 1971) 183-185. No. 37.

4. F.L. Holt, "Discovering the Lost History of Ancient Afghanistan: Hellenistic Bactria in Light of Recent Archaeological and Historical Research," *AncW* (1984) 3-28.

5. L. Robert (note 2), 441-454. Al.N. Oikonomides (note 2), 179 note 5.

reason for that? Klearchos answers "so that the Commandments will shine far around (to the Asian lands and peoples) the shrine of Kineas."⁶

Can we identify these "Commandments" so highly esteemed by Klearchos? Actually the second inscription on the base with the epigram identifies them automatically for us. It seems that the stone-cutter who re-inscribed the "Commandments" which Klearchos dedicated at Ai-Khanum had left no space on the stele for the last five of them. So he went on and added these overflowing commandments on the base of the stele in his effort to make the text complete.⁷

Used as a first school book for the Greek world from the 6th c. B.C. down to the fall of the Byzantine Empire (1453 A.D.) and some centuries beyond it,⁸ "The Commandments of the Seven Wise Men" is one of the 'didactic' ancient Greek texts that have been preserved by the philological tradition. Basically known to us from an ancient copy of the Delphic inscription by a philosopher named Sosiades,⁹ (which Ioannes Stobaeus included in his *Anthologium*) "The Commandments" are now known also from hundreds of Byzantine and later manuscripts originating from other text traditions.¹⁰ It was printed for the first time in Venice by Aldus Manutius in 1495 (from a different text tradition than the Sosiades version), reprinted in different "didactic anthologies" later, included in collections of *Anecdota Graeca*,¹¹ and attracted some attention by classical

scholars,¹² but always as a minor text. Nobody, from the Renaissance down to 1966, really believed that this collection of "Commandments" originated from the text of the early and famous inscription which once stood "in the most holy Pythian shrine" at Delphi. We needed the testimony of Klearchos to awaken us to reality concerning the early date and the real scholarly value of the "Commandments of the Seven." Was our Klearchos the first learned man in the Greek world who spoke so highly of the "Commandments of the Seven?" Not really. Wherever in ancient Greek literature the "Commandments" are mentioned, it is only with words of respect and admiration.¹³ Herakleitos praised them,¹⁴ Socrates (according to Plato) bowed to them.¹⁵ Τὰ ἐν Δελφοῖς γράμματα τὰ σοφὰ ταῦτα... τό τε Γνῶθι σαυτὸν καὶ τὸ Μηδέν ἄγαν καὶ τάλλα τὰ τοιαῦτα. (= *These wise precepts inscribed at Delphi... like the 'Know Thyself,' "Nothing in excess" and the other similar to them*).

Sixty-four years before the discovery of the inscribed base at Ai-Khanum, another Greek inscription of the 3rd c. B.C. was published. Found in an excavation at the ruins of Miletopolis (= *Ghirmasti*) in Asia Minor, this inscription was the first epigraphical record of the "Commandments of the Seven" to become known. Fifty-five "Commandments" were readable on this major fragment from a stele, which in all probability, once stood in the gymnasium of Miletopolis.¹⁶

6. It is clear that Klearchos, according to his own words, sees the educational value of the "Commandments of the Seven" as a major power for the Hellenisation of the peoples living beyond the Greco-Bactrian city at Ai-Khanoum.

7. According to L. Robert (note 2) 429-430.

8. According to Plato (*Hipparchus*, 228c-229) the "Commandments of the Seven" were already established as a basis for Athenian education at the times of the rule by the Pisistratids (before 514 B.C.).

9. Possibly a contemporary of Klearchos, who copied also the stele at Delphi in an effort to circulate an accurate text. As we have learned from the epigram of Klearchos, the name of the copier was noted on a manuscript as a guarantee that the copy was free from later changes and addenda.

10. The enormous number of manuscripts on the "Commandments" in Libraries and institutions has never been used for a critical edition of their text. We know now that we have at least three different text-traditions (Sosiades, Klearchos, Anonymous) and almost 50% of the text circulating in the 3rd c. B.C.

11. Aldus included the "Commandments" and several other *opuscula* in his first edition of Theocritus (Venice, 1495). H. Diels lists in Dittb. *Syll.* 1268 the major manuscripts published.

12. F. Schultz, "Die Sprüche der delphischen Säule," *Philologus* 24 (1866) 193-226. A. Delatte, "Les Sentences des Sept Sages du Manuscrit d'Athènes 1070." *Fontes Ambrosiani* xxiv; (Milano, 1951) 13-18.

13. Most of the testimonia are collected by F. Schultz (note 12) 193-202.

14. W.K.C. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* I (Cambridge, 1971) 417.

15. Plato, *Hipparchus* 228c-229. Cf. Plato, *Protagoras* 343a-c.

16. Dittb. *Syll.* 1268. See also: L. Robert (note 2) 426-429, Al.N. Oikonomides (note 2) 179.

A few years after I studied the *editio principis* of the epigram of Klearchos and the closing lines from the "Commandments of the Seven" on the inscribed stele-base from Ai-Khanum, I was looking at a dissertation publishing some Greek papyri in the collection of the University of Athens.¹⁷ It was one of the papyri in this dissertation (identified as a 'school exercise') which I had the great pleasure to re-identify as the oldest known manuscript fragment of the "Commandments of the Seven" in an article published in 1980.¹⁸ One of the most interesting elements in this new fragment was that it had partially preserved the second line from the ancient title of the collection and the first eight of the "Commandments." A better edition of this text, however, demanded either an inspection of the original papyrus or a good photograph. Five years lapsed until I was able to obtain a good photograph of *P. Univ. Athen.* 2782 (the papyrus itself seems to have been lost!) and this did not come as a help from the University library, but from the private files of a personal friend.¹⁹

In preparing the revised text of the papyrus fragment for publication, I soon came to realize that what I was planning was not what was really needed. From the fragment of the papyrus (*Egypt*), the inscription from Miletopolis (*Asia Minor*) and the inscriptions from Ai-Khanum (*Afghanistan*), we are given the rare opportunity to reconstruct part of an older edition of the "Commandments of the Seven" (as they were known to the Hellenistic world in the 3rd c. B.C.) *ca.* seven hundred years earlier than the date when the *Anthologium* of Ioannes Stobaeus was compiled and introduced to the schools. This was the text really needed by fellow scholars and teachers and by no means some meagre notes on the first ten lines of it!

So I revised my first plans and as a result of this revision, the fragments of this Hellenistic edition of the "Commandments of the Seven" are now grouped together as one "New Text," according to the order indicated in the copy of the "Commandments" of Sosiades as preserved

by Stobaeus. Then, when I was arranging the cross-references between the "New Text" and the Sosiades-copy, I realized one more thing. The two reference editions of Stobaeus not only rarely appeared in minor and personal libraries, but in the particular case of the "Commandments of the Seven" both were not prepared to be handy for cross-reference, because the commandments were not individually numbered in them.

Following these observations, a new edition of the Sosiades-copy had to be prepared numbering the commandments in Hense's text. By arranging the Greek text of the 147 commandments in three columns on the same page, I tried to give not only a vague idea of what the arrangement of the commandments on the lost stele from Ai Khanum might have been, but to provide also a visual proof that the whole text of the "Commandments of the Seven" could fit well on one stone stele.

Facing the page of Greek text, also in three columns, an English translation of the commandments is printed. Despite my firm belief that in our times any important Greek text should be accompanied by an adequate English translation, even in articles for scholarly journals, in the case of the "Commandments of the Seven," I have my doubts about the right of an editor to provide *one translation* for many of them. These thought provoking brief commandments are by no means the type of text that can be assigned easily as having *one* meaning. By translating them in another language, there is always the danger to push the reader to accept a meaning originating from your own misunderstanding of the text, or not towards the basic meaning but to a secondary one. Even the ancient Greeks had severe difficulties in fully understanding many of the commandments and especially the most 'archaic' ones. We must always remember that the original inscription "in the most holy Pythian shrine" was cut on the stele sometime in the early 6th c. B.C. (if not earlier) and that the Greek language, even in our own times is continuing to grow, change,

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17. M.G. Tsoukalas, 'Ανέχδοτοι φιλολογικοί καὶ ιδιωτικοί πάπυροι (Athens, 1962).

18. See: Al.N. Oikonomides (note 2).

19. My thanks are due to Basil Mandilaras for his kindness, and also for permitting the publication of this photograph (Fig. 2).

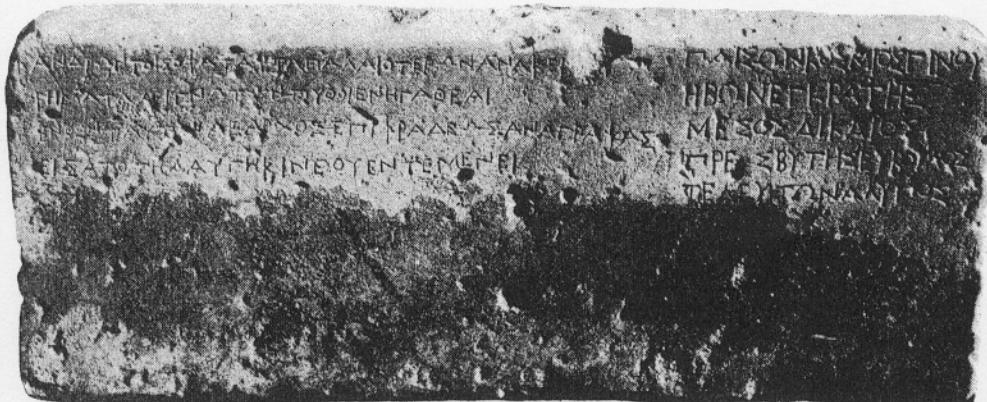
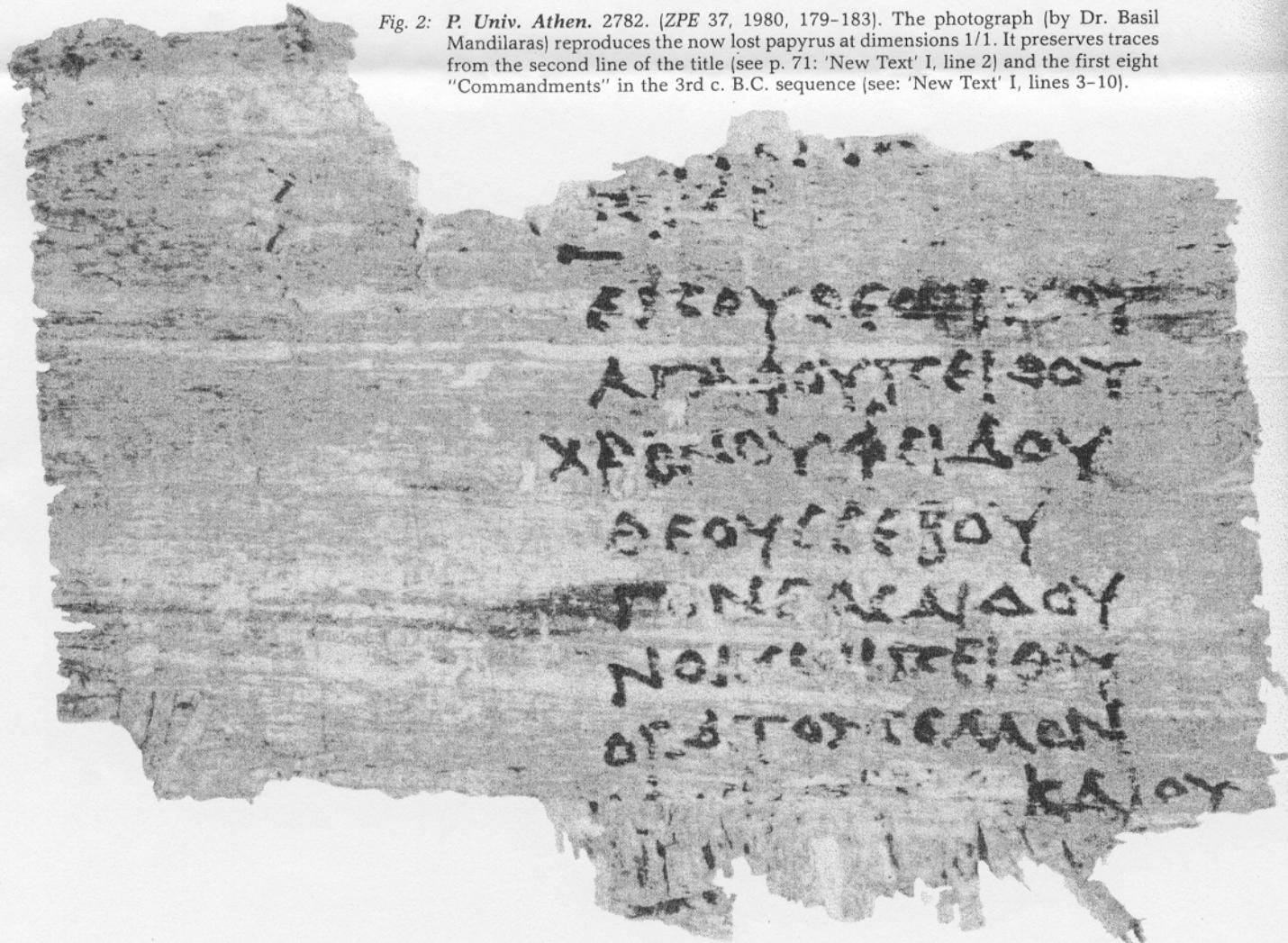


Fig. 1: *Inscriptio Bactriana* (CRAI 1968, 421-426). The base for the stele with "The Commandments of the Seven" which once stood in the hero-shrine of Kineas at Ai Khanum. The inscription to the left is the dedicatory epigram of Klearchos (see: p. 67) and the one to the right, the last five "Commandments" which did not fit on the stele (see p. 71: 'New Text' V, lines 69-73).

Fig. 2: *P. Univ. Athen.* 2782. (ZPE 37, 1980, 179-183). The photograph (by Dr. Basil Mandilaras) reproduces the now lost papyrus at dimensions 1/1. It preserves traces from the second line of the title (see p. 71: 'New Text' I, line 2) and the first eight "Commandments" in the 3rd c. B.C. sequence (see: 'New Text' I, lines 3-10).



The Commandments of the Seven (New Text formed from P. Univ. Athen. 2782 and the Inscriptions from Miletopolis in Asia Minor and Ai-Khanum in Afghanistan). *3rd c. B.C.*

I. *P. Univ. Athen.* 2782./ Ref. Ed.: *ZPE* 37 (1980) 179–183. (Ed. Al.N. Oikonomides) 3rd c. B.C. *Fig. 2.*

II. *Inscr. Miletopolitana*. (Col. I)/ Ref. Ed.: *Dittb. Syll.* 3 1268 (Ed. H. Diels). Cf. Louis Robert, "De Delphes a l'Oxus." *CRAI* 1968, 426–428. 3rd c. B.C. *Fig. 3.*

III. *Inscr. Bactriana*. Ref. Ed.: Louis Robert, *CRAI* 1968, 430–431. 3rd c. B.C. 

IV. *Inscr. Miletopolitana*. (Col. II). Cf. II (above).

V. *Inscr. Bactriana*. Ref. Ed.: Louis Robert, *CRAI* 1968, 424–426. Cf. Inst. Fernand-Courby, *Nouveau Choix d'Inscriptions Grecques*. (Paris, 1971) 183–185, No. 37. 3rd c. B.C. *Fig. 1.*

A bold star (★) indicates that the commandment marked with it does not appear in the Sosiades-text preserved by Stobaeus (see our p. 74). When the commandment appears, the reference is given with an S (and its No.) e.g., S 44. If an asterisk follows the number (E.g. S 92*), that indicates a slight difference in words but not in meaning.

I	III	IV	V
1 [Γποθῆκαι] [τῶ]γ ἔ[πει]ά.	36 Ε[ὐλόγει πάντας] Φιλόσοφ[ος γίνον]	S 47 S 48	
3 "Ἐπον θεῶι 〈τοῦ〉 Ἀγαθοῦ πείθον	S 1 ★	39 Πέρας ἔ[πιτέλει] Πᾶσιν φιλοφρό[νει]	S 92* S 69*
6 Θεοὺς σέβον Γονέας αἰδοῦ	S 3 S 4	Γυναικὸς ἄρχ[ε] Σαντὸν εὐ πο[ίει]	S 95 S 96
9 "Ορα τὸ μέλλον Ἡ[ττῶ ὑπὸ δι]καίου	S 2 S 40 S 5	42 Εὐπροσήγορος γέ[νον] Ἄποκρίνον ἐγ καιρῶ[ι] [Ἄ]μαρτῶν μετανόει Ο[φ]θαλμοῦ κράτε[ι] Φιλίαν φύλασσε	S 97 S 98* S101* S102 S105
II	48 Βούλεύον χρόνω[ι]. Πρ[ᾶ]σσε σὸν [ν]όμω[ι]?	S 15 S 16 S 18 S 19 S 20 S 21 S 22 S 27 S 28 S 29 S 31 S 32 S 33 S 37 S 41 S 36*	S103 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ S 56* S108* S109 ★ ★ ★ S111 S112 S114* S113 ★ S115 ★ ★ ★ S116 ★ S117 ★
24 Χάριν ἀπόδος Φίλοις εὐνόει [Ἐ]χθροὺς ἀμύνου	51 Ομόνοι[αν] ἀσκει Μηθενὸς καταφρόνε[ι] Ἄπορρητα κρύπτε	54 Τὸ κρατοῦμ φόρον Χρόνῳ πίστεν[ε] Λάβε πρὸς ἡδονήν Προσκύνει τὸ θεῖο[ν] Καιρὸμ προσδέχον	S118 S119 S120 S121 S122 S123 S124 S125 S126 S127 S128 S129 S130 S131 S132 S133 S134 S135 S136 S137 S138 S139 S140 S141 S142 S143 S144 S145 S146*
27 Συγγενεῖς ἀσκει [Κ]ακίας ἀπέχον [Κ]οινὸς γίνον	60 Επὶ φώμηι κανχῶ Γῆρας προσδέχον Χρῶ τῷ συμφέροντ[ι] Εὐφημίαν ἀσκ[ει] Ψεῦδος αἰσχύνο[ν] Ἄπεχθειαν φεῦγε	63 Πιστεύων μὴ α... Πλούτει δικαιῶς Ομολογ[ίας ἔμμενε]	S147 S148 S149 S150 S151 S152 S153 S154 S155 S156 S157 S158 S159 S160 S161 S162 S163 S164 S165 S166 S167 S168 S169 S170 S171 S172 S173 S174 S175 S176 S177 S178 S179 S180 S181 S182 S183 S184 S185 S186 S187 S188 S189 S190 S191 S192 S193 S194 S195 S196 S197 S198 S199 S200 S201 S202 S203 S204 S205 S206 S207 S208 S209 S210 S211 S212 S213 S214 S215 S216 S217 S218 S219 S220 S221 S222 S223 S224 S225 S226 S227 S228 S229 S230 S231 S232 S233 S234 S235 S236 S237 S238 S239 S240 S241 S242 S243 S244 S245 S246 S247 S248 S249 S250 S251 S252 S253 S254 S255 S256 S257 S258 S259 S260 S261 S262 S263 S264 S265 S266 S267 S268 S269 S270 S271 S272 S273 S274 S275 S276 S277 S278 S279 S280 S281 S282 S283 S284 S285 S286 S287 S288 S289 S290 S291 S292 S293 S294 S295 S296 S297 S298 S299 S300 S301 S302 S303 S304 S305 S306 S307 S308 S309 S310 S311 S312 S313 S314 S315 S316 S317 S318 S319 S320 S321 S322 S323 S324 S325 S326 S327 S328 S329 S330 S331 S332 S333 S334 S335 S336 S337 S338 S339 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S70616 S70617 S70618 S70619 S70620 S70621 S70622 S70623 S70624 S70625 S70626 S70627 S70628 S70629 S70630 S70631 S70632 S70633 S70634 S70635 S70636 S70637 S70638 S70639 S70640 S70641 S70642 S70643 S70644 S70645 S70646 S70647 S70648 S70649 S70650 S70651 S70652 S70653 S70654 S70655 S70656 S70657 S70658 S70659 S70660 S70661 S70662 S70663 S70664 S70665 S70666 S70667 S70668 S70669 S70670 S70671 S70672 S70673 S70674 S70675 S70676 S70677 S70678 S70679 S70680 S70681 S70682 S70683 S70684 S70685 S70686 S70687 S70688 S70689 S70690 S70691 S70692 S70693 S70694 S70695 S70696 S70697 S70698 S70699 S70700 S70701 S70702 S70703 S70704 S70705 S70706 S70707 S70708 S70709 S70710 S70711 S70712 S70713 S70714 S70715 S70716 S70717 S70718 S70719 S70720 S70721 S70722 S70723 S70724 S70725 S70726 S70727 S70728 S70729 S70730 S70731 S70732 S70733 S70734 S70735 S70736 S70737 S70738 S70739 S70740 S70741 S70742 S70743 S70744 S70745 S70746 S70747 S70748 S70749 S70750 S70751 S70752 S70753 S70754 S70755 S70756 S70757 S70758 S70759 S70760 S70761 S70762 S70763 S70764 S70765 S70766 S70767 S70768 S70769 S70770 S70771 S70772 S70773 S70774 S70775 S70776 S70777 S70778 S70779 S70780 S70781 S70782 S70783 S70784 S70785 S70786 S70787 S70788 S70789 S70790 S70791 S70792 S70793 S70794 S70795 S70796 S70797 S70798 S70799 S70800 S70801 S70802 S70803 S70804 S70805 S70806 S70807 S70808 S70809 S70810 S70811 S70812 S70813 S70814 S70815 S70816 S70817 S70818 S70819 S70820 S70821 S70822 S70823 S70824 S70825 S70826 S70827 S70828 S70829 S70830 S70831 S70832 S70833 S70834 S70835 S70836 S70837 S70838 S70839 S70840 S70841 S70

cont. from p. 69

revise and add meanings to the enormous number of words forming its vocabulary.

This is the main reason that I ask the reader of the translation to consider it only as a provisional one and in the instance that he is not able to follow the concept of a commandment as it appears in the translation, to always go back to the Greek text and open his *LSJ* Greek-English Lexicon (Please! not the 'abridged' editions). In many cases, I am sure, not only more meaningful translations for many commandments will see the light, but also several others

that we presently consider as adequately translated may obtain a better and deeper meaning.

* * *

For the reasons which I have explained above, a complete translation is not provided for the "New Text." By using the cross-reference columns, the reader can find provisional English translations for all the commandments which also appear in the Sosiades copy. In the *Commentary*, provisional translations of the commandments marked with a bold star (★) have also been added.

11^o
 ΙΑΟΙΣ ΒΟΗΣΕΙ ΡΛΙ.
 ΥΜΟΥΚΡΑΤΕΙ ΠΑΣΙΝ ΗΛΟΤΡ
 ΙΚΑ ΙΕΥΓΕ ΣΑΥΤΟΝΕΙ/ΠΟΙ
 ΙΑΡΤΥΡΕΙΟΣΙΑ ΑΕΥΠΙΚΣΙ ΙΓΟΡΟΣΓΙΝ
 ΔΛΗΣΚΡΧΙ ΕΙΓ. ΑΠΟΚΡΙΝΟΤΕΓΚΑΛΗ
 -ΥΧΗΝΝΟ ΙΓ- ΜΑΙ Ι ΝΜΛΤΗΝΕ
 ΟΟΙΝΟΙΑΝ. ΙΓ- ΣΙΩΑΛΛΟΥΚΡΑΤΙ
 ΙΚ.ΙΜΤ ΣΙΛΒΟΥΛΕΥΟΥ. ΡΟΝΓ
 ΙΛΙΛΛΑΤ ΤΠΑ ΓΡ ΣΣΕΣΥΝ ΟΡ Η
 ΙΝΝΑΓΜ
 ΙΔΕΙΑΣ ΕΧΟΥ ΙΝΩΝΙΑ Ι ΛΣΚΕΙ
 ΙΟ ΙΝΙΩ ΚΕ ΙΗΕΝ. ΑΤΑΦΟΡΔ
 ΙΡΦ-ΗΝΕΓΡΑΙ ΕΙΑΓΩΗ Ι. ΚΡΥΙ Τ.
 ΤΡ ΣΕΔΙΚΛΙΑ ΧΡΣ. ΙΠΙΓΙΣ- ΕΥΕ
 ΙΝ ΑΓΡΔΟΣ ΛΑΓ ΓΡΟΙ ΗΛΟΝΗ
 ΙΑΟΙΣ ΣΥΝΟ- Ι ΠΙΣΣΕΚΥΡ Ι ΤΣΙΕΦ
 ΧΟΡΟΥ ΣΑΜΥΝΟΥ Ι ΗΡΟΜ. ΡΟΣΔΕΧΟΥ
 -ΥΓ- ΕΝΕΙΣΑ ΑΙΡΑΙ ΔΙΑΛΥΟΥ
 ΙΚ.Α ΣΑΠΤΕΧΟΥ ΓΗΡΛΓΠΡΟΣΔΕΧΟΥ
 ΟΙΝΟΣ ΓΙΝΟΥ ΧΡΣ. Ι ΛΣΥΜΦΕΡΟΝ
 Α' ΔΙ. Ι. ΦΥΛΑΣΣΕ ΕΤΦΗΜΙΑΝΑΙΚ
 ΙΑ ΠΙΧΑΡΙ Ι ΣΟΥ ΑΠΤΕΧΟΕΩΝ Ι ΦΕΥ
 ΤΒΡΙΜΜΦ' ΣΕΙ ΠΙΣΤΕΥΟΙ Ι ΗΛ
 ΥΦΗΜΙΣ ΠΝΟΥ ΓΛΟΥΤΕΙ
 ΤΤΑΣΕΛΕΕΙ Ι ΜΟΛΑΙ

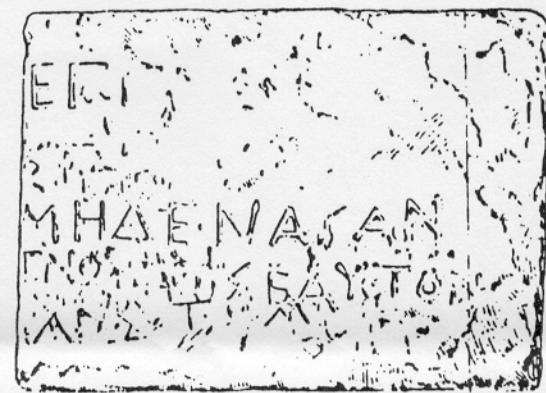


Fig. 4: *Inscriptio Therae insulae*. (IG XII 3, 1020 + Dittb. Syll.³ 1268, p. 394, note ★). Dated by Hiller von Gaertringen in the 4th c. B.C. and identified by the same as originating from the 'epheborum gymnasium,' the inscription (which presently seems to be the oldest epigraphical record of the "Commandments") needs a new reading from the stone (cf. M. Luebke's 'delineatio' above and Hiller's text below):

- A. 'Εγγ[ά] πάρα δὲ ζτα]
 Σ[πονδαῖα μελέτα (?)]
 Μηδὲν ζγαν
 Γνῶθ[ι] σεαντόν
- B. 'Αρ[ι] στο-
 -α-

My first observation is that Hiller's restoration of line 1 does not fit on the stone (judging from the size of the letters) and the only alternative restoration possible is:

'Εγγ[ά]νη φεῦγε] Sosiades 69

My second observation is that the restoration of line 2 is not one of the "Commandments of the Seven" in the 'New Text,' the Sosiades-copy, or in the best known manuscripts of the 'Anonymous' tradition. If the letter after the Σ is an Ε instead of a Π (cf. Luebke's drawing), the restorations possible are three:

Σε[αντὸν ισθι]	Sosiades 8
Σε[αντὸν αἰδοῖ]	Sosiades 129
Σε[αντὸν εῦ ποίει]	Sosiades 96

Fig. 3: *Inscriptio Miletopolitana*. (Dittb. Syll.³ 1268). The drawing reproduced here is the one which accompanied the *editio princeps* of the inscription by F.W. Hasluck (JHS 27, 1901, 62). One notes two letters from a line above 'New Text' line 11 (— ΠΟ —) not transcribed before. For the photograph of a squeeze from the stele see: L. Robert, CRAI 1968, p. 428.

In a world where for more than two decades of centuries the Judeo-Christian tradition has been proclaiming as the supreme ethical law of humanity, a severe and primitive group of "Ten Commandments," the rediscovery and reevaluation of a more perfect ancient ethical law, based on higher cultural standards, is definitely bound to create some questions not easy to answer. The most important of them already stands in front of us: "How can one believe that the "Ten Commandments" represent the direct words of God to Mankind when the *pagan* 'Commandments of the Seven' express a higher concept and a more realistic vision of ethical law?"

There is nothing metaphysical or mysterious related to the origins of the material which was used for the formation of the Greek ethical law. Popular wisdom first created proverbs and the best of these proverbs were accepted as major ethical guide-lines. "Seven Wise Men" coming from all parts of the Greek world met at Delphi (early 6th c. B.C.) with the purpose of forming a code from all these ethical maxims. Then, the code they compiled from the maxims they selected was inscribed on a stele of stone erected in front of Apollo's temple, 'publishing' thus the official text for anybody who wished to inspect it.

And the stele stood in its place for centuries and generations of Greek teachers, philosophers and common men copied it. And the copies travelled to every corner of the Greek world and far outside it after the conquests of Alexander the Great. To be a human being and act like one, as far as the Greeks were concerned, needed not a severe god terrifying the crowds and burning bushes demanding respect for himself by threats of destruction and doom. All that was needed for establishing an ethical law for a nation, a people or a city was to teach the younger generations the wisdom of the past on what one should and shouldn't do in a human society.

Behind every "Commandment" stands not a God, but an anonymous sage who is trying to open up in other people's minds a revelation of the nature of life.

* * *

From the Renaissance to our day, classical scholars have tried and continue to try to provide for their students, easy to comprehend books on 'beginning Greek.' It is a real irony that none of those who have tried this task knew anything until now about "The Commandments of the Seven," the work which was used to teach how to read and write, plus how to think in Greek, to Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Aeschylus and Aristophanes (to mention a few). We needed to excavate a Greek inscription at a site on the highlands of Afghanistan before we came to the

understanding that the manuscript tradition had already preserved for us the most valuable text for 'beginning Greek,' which, in our 'wisdom,' we had never thought or tried to use for the same purpose.

SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW? The answer is very simple: We have to go back to the roots! We know that "The Commandments of the Seven" is the earliest known didactic collection of Greek wisdom and we know also that it has successfully served Greek education for more than twenty full centuries. Regarding its ethical standard, all we can say is that it stands at a higher level than the Mosaic decalogue without claiming to be the word of any god, at the same time that it teaches total respect and obedience to Divine power.

As a text to be taught to students who are just starting to read Greek, we must observe that "The Commandments of the Seven" are very close to the dream-concept of a first reading-book. The sentences are brief and each one of them is dedicated to a different subject in the periphery of ethical conduct. Most of the verbs are in imperative (an easy way out of the complicated verb-forms which confuse the beginner) and the rest of the vocabulary is formed by the most essential words for a sound foundation in the most pure form of the ancient Greek language.

Facing brief sentences and simple vocabulary expressing high values in human ethics, the student will have to study very carefully among the different meanings of each word used in every commandment to fully comprehend its aim. That means not only a very productive use of the Greek-English Lexicon, but also a considerable expansion of the vocabulary controlled by the student if we count the different meanings of the same word he has to learn before he selects the right one.

So, go on and use "The Commandments of the Seven" in class and be amazed what your students will learn from it. Not only will they be saved from studying sentences that work faster than sleeping pills, like "the horses of Alcibiades will not run in the next race," but they will also save the money that they would have to pay for the privilege of studying ancient Greek composed by the dregs of text-book 'writers.'

This article may be reproduced in any number of copies necessary for a class in ancient Greek, with the permission of the writer and the publishers. The permission is given with the hope that teachers of Greek in our educational institutions will start thinking that which costs more is not necessarily the better or the best.

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Chicago, Illinois

‘Υποθῆκαι τῶν Ἐπτά. (Stobaeus 3.1.173 W. & Hense./ 3.80 Meineke) Σωσιάδον (ἀναγραφή).

“Ἐπον θεῷ	Φόνον ἀπέχον	Πόνει μετ’ εὐκλείας
Νόμῳ πείθον	Εὕχον δυνατά	100 Πρᾶττε ἀμετανοήτως
Θεοὺς σέβον	Σοφοῖς χρῶ	‘Αμαρτάνων μετανόει
Γονεῖς αἰδοῦ	‘Ηθος δοκίμαζε	‘Οφθαλμοῦ κράτει
5 Ἡττῶ ὑπὸ δικαίου	55 Λαβῶν ἀπόδος	Βούλεύον χρόνῳ
Γνῶθι μαθών	‘Υφορῶ μηδένα	Πρᾶττε συντόμως
‘Ακούσας νόει	Τέχνη χρῶ	105 Φιλίαν φύλαττε
Σαυτὸν ἵσθι	“Ο μέλλεις, δός	Εὐγνώμων γίνον
Γαμεῖν μέλλε	Εὐεργεσίας τίμα	‘Ομόνοιαν δίωκε
10 Καιρὸν γνῶθι	60 Φθόνει μηδενί	“Ἀρρητον κρύπτε
Φρόνει θνητά	Φυλακῆ πρόσεχε	Τὸ κρατοῦν φοβοῦ
Ξένος ὁν ἵσθι	‘Ελπίδα αἰνεῖ	110 Τὸ συμφέρον θηρῶ
Ἐστίαν τίμα	Διαβολὴν μίσει	Καιρὸν προσδέχον
‘Αρχε σεαυτοῦ	Δικαίως κτῶ	‘Εχθρας διάλυε
15 Φίλοις βοήθει	65 Ἀγαθοὺς τίμα	Γῆρας προσδέχον
Θυμοῦ κράτει	Κριτὴν γνῶθι	‘Επὶ ρώμῃ μὴ καυχῶ
Φρόνησιν ἄσκει	Γάμους κράτει	115 Εὐφημίαν ἄσκει
Πρόνοιαν τίμα	Τύχην νόμιζε	‘Απέχθειαν φεῦγε
“Ορκω μὴ χρῶ	‘Εγγύην φεῦγε	Πλούτει δικαίως
20 Φιλίαν ἀγάπα	70 Ἀπλῶς διαλέγον	Δόξαν μὴ λεῖπε
Παιδείας ἀντέχον	‘Ομοίοις χρῶ	Κακίαν μίσει
Δόξαν δίωκε	Δαπανῶν ἀρχον	120 Κινδύνει φρονίμως
Σοφίαν ζήλου	Κτώμενος ἥδους	Μανθάνων μὴ κάμνε
Καλὸν εὐ λέγε	Αἰσχύνην σέβον	Φειδόμενος μὴ λεῖπε
25 Ψέγε μηδένα	75 Χάριν ἐκτέλει	Χρησμοῦς θάνατος
‘Επαίνει ἀρετήν	Εὐτυχίαν εὕχον	Οὓς τρέφεις, ἀγάπα
Πρᾶττε δίκαια	Τύχην στέρεγε	125 ‘Απόντι μὴ μάχου
Φίλοις εὐνόει	‘Ακούων ὅρα	Πρεσβύτερον αἰδοῦ
‘Εχθροὺς ἀμύνον	‘Εργάζον κτητά	Νεώτερον δίδασκε
30 Εὐγένειαν ἄσκει	80 Ἔριν μίσει	Πλούτῳ ἀπίστει
Κακίας ἀπέχον	“Ονειδος ἔχθαιρε	Σεαυτὸν αἰδοῦ
Κοινὸς γίνον	Γλῶτταν ἵσχε	130 Μὴ ἀρχε ύψερτειν
“Ιδια φύλαττε	“Τροιν ἀμύνον	Προγόνους στεφάνου
‘Αλλοτρίων ἀπέχον	Κρῖνε δίκαια	Θρῆσκε ύπερ πατρίδος
35 “Ακονε πάντα	85 Χρῶ χρήμασιν	Τῷ βίῳ μὴ ἔχθον
Εὐφημος ἵσθι	‘Αδωροδόκητος δίκαιες	‘Επὶ νεκρῷ μὴ γέλα
Φίλῳ χαρίζον	Αἴτιῶ παρόντα	135 ‘Ατυχοῦντι συνάχθον
Μηδέν ἄγαν	Λέγε εἰδώς	Χαρίζον ἀβλαβῶς
Χρόνον φείδον	Βίας μὴ ἔχον	Μὴ ἐπὶ παντὶ λυποῦ
40 “Ορα τὸ μέλλον	90 Ἀλόπως βίον	‘Εξ εὐγενῶν γέννα
“Τροιν μίσει	‘Ομίλει πράγας	‘Επαγγέλον μηδενί
‘Ικέτας αἰδοῦ	Πέρας ἐπιτέλει μὴ	140 Φθιμένονς μὴ ἀδίκει
Πᾶσιν ἀρμόζον	ἀποδειλιῶν	Ἐν πάσχε ώς θνητός
Τιοὺς παίδενε	Φιλοφρόνει πᾶσιν	Τύχη μὴ πίστενε
45 “Ἐχων χαρίζον	95 Γυναικὸς ἄρχε	Παῖς ὁν κόσμοις ἵσθι,
Δόλον φοβοῦ	Σεαυτὸν εὐ ποίει	ἡβῶν ἐγκρατής,
Εὐλόγει πάντας	Ἐπύροστήγορος γίνον	145 μέσος δίκαιος,
Φιλόσοφος γίνον	‘Αποκρίνον ἐν καιρῷ	πρεσβύτης εὐλογος,
“Οσια κρίνε		τελευτῶν ἄλυπος.
50 Γνοὺς πρᾶττε		

The Commandments of the Seven (=the copy of Sosiades preserved by Stobaeus)

Follow God.
Obey the law.
Worship the Gods.
Respect your parents.
5 Be overcome by justice.
Know what you have learned.
Perceive what you have heard.
Be yourself.
Intend to get married.
10 Know your opportunity.
Think as a mortal.
If you are a stranger act like one.
Honor the hearth (or Hestia).
Control yourself.
15 Help your friends.
Control anger.
Exercise prudence.
Honor providence.
Do not use an oath.
20 Love friendship.
Cling to discipline.
Pursue honor.
Long for wisdom.
Praise the good.
25 Find fault with no one.
Praise virtue.
Practice what is just.
Be kind to friends.
Watch out for your enemies.
30 Exercise nobility of character.
Shun evil.
Be impartial.
Guard what is yours.
Shun what belongs to others.
35 Listen to everyone.
Be (religiously) silent.
Do a favor for a friend.
Nothing to excess.
Use time sparingly.
40 Foresee the future.
Despise insolence.
Have respect for suppliants.
Be accommodated in everything.
Educate your sons.
45 Give what you have.
Fear deceit.
Speak well of everyone.
Be a seeker of wisdom.
Choose what is divine.
50 Act when you know.

Shun murder.
Pray for things possible.
Consult the wise.
Test the character.
55 Give back what you have received.
Down-look no one.
Use your skill.
Do what you mean to do.
Honor a benefaction.
60 Be jealous of no one.
Be on your guard.
Praise hope.
Despise a slanderer.
Gain possessions justly.
65 Honor good men.
Know the judge.
Master wedding-feasts.
Recognize fortune.
Flee a pledge.
70 Speak plainly.
Associate with your peers.
Govern your expenses.
Be happy with what you have.
Revere a sense of shame.
75 Fulfill a favor.
Pray for happiness.
Be fond of fortune.
Observe what you have heard.
Work for what you can own.
80 Despise strife.
Detest disgrace.
Restrain the tongue.
Keep yourself from insolence.
Make just judgments.
85 Use what you have.
Judge incorruptibly.
Accuse one who is present.
Tell when you know.
Do not depend on strength.
90 Live without sorrow.
Live together meekly.
Finish the race without shrinking back.
Deal kindly with everyone.
Do not curse your sons.
95 Rule your wife.
Benefit yourself.
Be courteous.
Give a timely response.

Struggle with glory.
100 Act without repenting.
Repent of sins.
Control the eye.
Give a timely counsel.
Act quickly.
105 Guard friendship.
Be grateful.
Pursue harmony.
Keep deeply the top secret.
Fear ruling.
110 Pursue what is profitable.
Accept due measure.
Do away with enmities.
Accept old age.
Do not boast in might.
115 Exercise (religious) silence.
Flee enmity.
Acquire wealth justly.
Do not abandon honor.
Despise evil.
120 Venture into danger prudently.
Do not tire of learning.
Do not stop to be thrifty.
Admire oracles.
Love whom you rear.
125 Do not oppose someone absent.
Respect an elder.
Teach a youngster.
Do not trust wealth.
Respect yourself.
130 Do not begin to be insolent.
Crown your ancestors.
Die for your country.
Do not be discontented by life.
Do not make fun of the dead.
135 Share the load of the unfortunate.
Gratify without harming.
Grieve for no one.
Beget from noble routes.
Make promises to no one.
140 Do not wrong the dead.
Be well off as a mortal.
Do not trust fortune.
As a child be well-behaved,
as a youth — self-disciplined,
145 as of middle-age — just,
as an old man — sensible, on reaching the end — without sorrow

Commentary to the "New Text" of *The Commandments of the Seven* (3rd c. B.C.)

[see: p. 71]

The 'New Text,' formed from the texts of one papyrus and three inscriptions, preserves only 70 commandments. Comparing it with the copy of Sosiades, which preserved 147 commandments, we understand that what we presently have represents almost 50% of the version known in the 3rd c. B.C.

Striking is the fact that from a total of 70 commandments in our text, 17 do not appear in the copy of Sosiades (★) and 10 more are variations of commandments listed in it. Unfortunately, statistics cannot be of much help in this case because the

majority of the differences appear in the inscription from Miletopolis (the biggest part of our 'New Text'), while the texts of the papyrus and the two other inscriptions together record only one commandment not in Sosiades (line 4) and one only minor variation (line 72). At this point any further observations may lead to a number of unsupportable speculations and nonsensical conclusions without the help of a new unpublished text of "The Commandments" from papyrus or inscription dating also in the 3rd c. B.C.

* * *

Line 4: The commandment is unlisted in Sosiades and the m/s tradition. A possible translation will be: *Obey the virtuous.*

Lines 6–8: The sequence of the three commandments (disturbed in Sosiades and the other m/ss) was the same in the early 5th c. B.C. as we learn from a fragment of Euripides (Nauck, *NTG²* 853: see *CB 63*, 1987, 66).

Line above line 11: The facsimile drawing indicates traces of two letters which I think can be transcribed: [...]ΠΙΩ[— —] (See our Fig. 3 on p. 72). A possible restoration is [”Αλυπό[ς βίον]” from the commandment S 90. Translate: *Live without sorrow.*

Lines 13–15: We should note that the three commandments (unlisted in Sosiades and the other m/ss) appear as an interpolation due to the 'editor' of the copy used for the inscription of Miletopolis, who repeated the same in lines 49–51 and 55–57. A translation of the three interpolated commandments will be: *Avoid the unjust. Testify what is right. Control pleasure.*

Line 22: Translate; *Praise virtue.*

Line 24: Translate; *Return a favour.*

Line 27: Translate; *Train your relatives.*

Line 35: Questionable restoration. Cf. the facsimile drawing in Fig. 3.

Lines 49–51: A second interpolation of a group of three commandments (unlisted in Sosiades and the other m/ss) by the 'editor' Cf. our comm. on lines 13–15 above. Translate: *Act according to the law. Administer justice. Live in concordance.*

Lines 55–57: A third interpolation of three unlisted commandments as in the cases of lines 13–15 and 49–51 (see our comm. above). Translate: *Believe in time. Receive for the pleasure. Prostrate before the divine.*

Line 60: While the Sosiades copy and all the m/ss say exactly the opposite (S 114 *Do not boast in might*), the 'editor' of the copy used for the inscription of Miletopolis decided that this was not the right commandment to be inscribed in a gymnasium. So by omitting the MH from the original he transformed the commandment to: *Boast in might.*

Line 62: Translate; *Use the one who has the same interests as you.*

Line 64: Translate; *Be embarrassed to lie.*

Line 66: Since the restorations proposed are rather questionable, a sure translation is presently impossible. The commandment seems to try to give a message like: *If you believe in something do not be scared to act for it.*

Line 68: Translate; *Be firm on what has been agreed.*

Line 72: The difference between a πρεσβύτης εῦβουλος (inscr.) and one εὐλογος (Sosiades & m/ss) does not change at all the meaning of the commandment.